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Return to Reuben Wood's files

STETSON UNIVERSITY

DELAND, FLORIDA

32720

June 21, 1965

DEPARTMENT OF AMERICAN STUDIES

Professor Reuben E. Wood
The George Washington University
Washington, D. C. 20006

Dear Reuben:

Since I am not going to be able to contribute substantially to your investigation at this date and from this place I will at least reply promptly. There are a few things I could point out that could not be pointed out equally well and perhaps with more detail by other members of the Faculty Committee to Advise and Consult with the Board of Trustees on the Selection of a President.

Two things seem worthy of stress. One is that the faculty code clearly calls for consultation between the Faculty Committee and members (I stress the plural) of the Board of Trustees. Our experience involved one meeting early in the game with the Board committee and a flurry of meetings very late in the game. In the interim, as our progress reports pointed out, we were conferring only with Mr. Ellison who purported to speak for the entire Board committee to us and who doubtless filtered the views which we sought to express to the Board. It stands to reason that no one person, however well-motivated, can undertake to serve this kind of function on a continuing basis in such a vital process wherein so many varied shades of reaction and opinion are involved. The faculty committee recognized this shortcoming in the process and consistently petitioned for more frequent and meaningful meetings with the Board committee.

The second point has to do with the establishment of an orderly process of selection without which no effective consultation can take place. After the first joint meeting of the two Committees when the faculty Committee presented a ranked list of candidates and received favorable reaction to two of them, nothing approaching system was brought to bear on the task at hand regardless of how urgently the faculty committee made felt this need. We knew that prospects were being approached throughout the country on what we could only fairly describe as a random basis. We have a reason to believe that some interviews between members of the Board and prospective presidential candidates went far beyond a preliminary exchange of views. In more than one instance a candidate felt he had received what amounted to an offer long before (if ever) his name was brought to the attention of the faculty committee. The only incident I personally heard of involved Stephen Bailey and can be checked through Dr. Sally O. Shames on our campus. Whether or not good faith was abused by the trustees in approaching candidates seriously before faculty evaluation had taken place (and this seems probable) it is at least certain that this process of selection took place without the proper establishment of procedures which would and should have allowed for a meaningful participation in the process by the Faculty Committee.

I will be back in town shortly after August 1st and will be available, with my notes and records, to your Committee if my presence is desired. Meanwhile I wish you Godspeed in your task and close with warm personal greetings from rainy Florida.

Sincerely,

Bob

Robert H. Walker

RHW:zc

15 July 1965

Mr. E. K. Morris
Chairman of the Board
Security Storage Company
1701 Florida Avenue, N. W.
Washington D. C. 20009

Dear Mr. Morris:

The attached is a transcript of the notes taken on June 23, 1965 when you were interviewed by Professor Wood's Committee. They are to be used only for the internal affairs of the Committee and will not be attributed to you in any report without your permission.

If you care to delete anything, add anything, or correct any misstatement, please do so and return to Mrs. Brosnan, Registrar's Office, Building C, The George Washington University, marked "Personal" if you please.

Very truly yours,

Ruth B. Brosnan, Secretary
for
Reuben E. Wood, Chairman

15 July 1965

Mr. Charles E. Phillips, President
Equitable Life Insurance Company
3900 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Phillips:

The attached is a transcript of the notes taken on June 23, 1965 when you were interviewed by Professor Wood's Committee. They are to be used only for the internal affairs of the Committee and will not be attributed to you in any report without your permission.

If you care to delete anything, add anything, or correct any misstatement, please do so and return to Mrs. Brosnan, Registrar's Office, Building C, The George Washington University, marked "Personal" if you please.

Very truly yours,

Ruth B. Brosnan, Secretary
for
Reuben E. Wood, Chairman